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SFAA Welcomes New Leaders
SFAA recently announced two additions to its leadership team. Julie Alleyne will join SFAA as Vice President of Policy and General Counsel, and Lee Ann Alexander will join the team as Vice President of Government Affairs.

Julie worked for SFAA member companies for 17 years where she closely partnered with the business on a wide variety of significant underwriting, regulatory, and legal issues. She recently led her own surety agency focused on a new commercial surety product in the multifamily housing market. Julie has authored several publications covering surety and fidelity topics, and she has been a guest speaker at numerous surety and fidelity industry conferences. She will be responsible for leading SFAA’s policy, legal, and promotional work for the contract surety, commercial surety and fidelity lines of business, as well as the legal and risk management issues affecting the association.

Lee Ann comes to SFAA from a major property & casualty company where she spent 18 years as the senior public affairs officer. She also has experience working in Congress, on Senate and presidential campaigns, and with McKinsey & Company, as well as two major law firms. She has served on SFAA’s Government Affairs Committee for the last six years, and in so doing, developed a significant understanding of the products provided by SFAA’s members and SFAA’s legislative and regulatory priorities.

For full press release announcements, please [click here](#).

SFAA is excited to welcome Julie and Lee Ann to the team!

**SFAA Urges FCC to Accept Surety Bonds**

SFAA and submitted comments to encourage the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to accept surety bond protections, in lieu of letters of credit, for telecommunication providers participating in its Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF). The FCC is expanding the RDOF program to $20.4 billion to provide greater financial support for rural areas lacking access to adequate fixed broadband service. Program participants have voiced concerns over the FCC’s current requirement to obtain a costly letter of credit in order to minimize the risk to public funds. SFAA is collaborating with the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association (WISPA) to educate their members on the benefits of surety bond protections and to urge the FCC to accept bonds to satisfy its current letter of credit requirement.

**Construction Industry Coalition Advocates for Exempting Miller Act from Indexing**

The Construction Industry Procurement Coalition (CIPC), which includes several of
the largest trade associations in the construction industry, submitted a statement to the leadership of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees in support of exempting the Miller Act threshold from increasing as they advance this year’s National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). If the exemption is not adopted, the federal Miller Act threshold is expected to be increased in 2020 by $50,000 to $200,000. The letter emphasizes the important role the Miller Act provides by requiring protection for subcontractors and suppliers on larger federal projects. Many subcontractors and suppliers on federal construction projects are small contractors for whom not getting paid could be catastrophic. SFAA will continue to advocate for Senate leaders to accept a provision in the House NDAA legislation that includes language to exempt the Miller Act from periodic increases for inflation.

Senate Advances Increase in Transportation Funding

The Senate Appropriations Committee has now approved its version of the fiscal year 2020 funding package for U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) programs. The Senate bill, like the House bill passed in June, includes the full $46.365 billion FAST Act obligation limitation for the federal-aid highway program, a $1.1 billion increase over 2019. In addition, the bill includes $2.7 billion in discretionary appropriations for highway programs. The Senate bill provides a $1 billion appropriation for BUILD grants, the same as the House and the same as in 2019. Transit formula grants total $10.1 billion, from the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund, consistent with the FAST Act. However, it is unlikely that the full House and Senate will approve these bills or negotiate final spending figures prior to the end of the fiscal year on September 30. Temporary funding measures for U.S. DOT programs will likely be included as part of the Continuing Resolution that will be necessary to keep the federal government open.

Senate Looks at Next Steps on Water Infrastructure

On September 19, the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to discuss the importance of water resource infrastructure to the U.S. economy. This is the first of a series of Senate hearings that will be held as Congress considers reauthorization of the Water Resource Development Act (WRDA). WRDA authorizes billions in funding for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works projects including navigation (dredging, locks), flood control (levees), hydropower (dams), recreation (parks), and water supply. WRDA also authorizes all new federal spending on projects involving disaster recovery. During the hearing, representatives from the Associated General Contractors
recommended several steps to improve the program and address the challenges posed by the nation’s water infrastructure needs. WRDA will need to be considered again before it expires in 2020.

Recommendations included:

- Support for a One Federal Decision process for environmental reviews and authorizations for major projects
- Reform cost-benefit analyses
- Formalized partnering on Civil Works projects
- Specific deadlines for completing the permitting & review process

Preliminary Stat Reports to be Posted This Week

The preliminary 2018 statistical plan reports are scheduled to be posted this week on the SFAA website in the “Statistics” section, under “Statistical Reports: Statistical Plan Data.” The reports are based on premium and loss data reported by members in response to this year’s Call for Statistics and have been reconciled against each company’s Annual Statement. The reports include the Annual Countrywide Class Experience, Annual Subline Summaries, 5-Year Statewide Class Experience, 12-Year Countrywide Subline Summaries and the Fidelity Financial Institutions Cause of Loss reports. Columns of data include direct premium written, direct premium earned and direct losses incurred, as well as the direct loss ratio. Final versions of these reports containing any supplement data reported to the SFAA are scheduled to be compiled and posted before the end of the year.

SFAA to Promote Underwriting Careers at Gamma Iota Sigma

SFAA is heading to Texas to promote careers in surety and fidelity at the Annual Gamma Iota Sigma Conference from September 25-27.

Michael Assels of Travelers will lead our industry education session, and SFAA will have a booth at the Career Expo, with support from representatives from member companies. The event also will serve as the kickoff of the Surety & Fidelity Industry Intern and Scholarship Program for 2020.

Please check SFAA’s career page for a link to your organization’s recruiting site. If you wish to add a link, please send your link address to Barbara Reiff (breiff@surety.org).
Contact Us

The Surety & Fidelity Association of America
www.surety.org

The Surety & Fidelity Association of America (SFAA) is a trade association of more than 425 insurance companies that write over 98 percent of surety and fidelity bonds in the U.S. SFAA is licensed as a rating or advisory organization in all states and it has been designated by state insurance departments as a statistical agent for the reporting of fidelity and surety experience.

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